

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

**St. John Lutheran Church
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2017, 10:00pm**

Welcome to the Christmas Eve service. May the joy of Christ's birth into our world bring faith and forgiveness to your hearts. We ask everyone to complete an attendance card located by the hymnals, and place it in the offering plate. We invite you to join us Christmas Day at 10:00am for a service of Holy Communion. If this is your first time at our church, we invite you to visit again. Sunday services are at 8:00 and 10:45 am each week and Wednesdays at 7:15 pm.

Prelude *In dulci jubilo*

J.S. Bach & M. Dupre

Please stand

The Opening Carol: *Once in Royal David's City*

Hymn 376 (st. 1 Choir)

The Greeting

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmastide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Therefore let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience, unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child.

But first let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and good will among all His people; for unity and brotherhood within the church He came to build, and especially in this our church.

And because this would rejoice His heart, let us remember in His name the poor and helpless; the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and forgotten, the aged; the little children and those not yet born; all those who know not the Lord Jesus or who love Him not or who by sin have grieved His heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light; that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven in the words which Christ Himself taught us:

People: Our Father, who art in heaven . . .

Please be seated

The First Lesson

God declares in the Garden of Eden that the woman's Seed shall bruise the serpent's head.

Genesis 3:8-15

The Carol: *Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light* **Hymn 378**

The Second Lesson

God promises Abraham that in his Seed all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 22:15-18

The Carol: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* **Hymn 359** (st. 2 Choir)

The Third Lesson

The Prophet Isaiah foretells Christ's birth and His kingdom.

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7; 60:1-6

The Carol: *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding* Men's Choir

The Fourth Lesson

The Prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2-4

The Carol: *O Little Town of Bethlehem* **Hymn 361**

The Fifth Lesson

The Angel Gabriel visits the blessed Virgin Mary.

Luke 1:26-35, 38

The Carol: *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* **Hymn 356**

The Sixth Lesson

St. Matthew tells of Christ's nativity.

Matthew 1:18-25

The Carol: *As On the Night Before the Blessed Morn*

Men's Choir

The Seventh Lesson

The shepherds go to the manger.

Luke 2:8-16.

The Carol: *Where Shepherds Lately Knelt*

Men's Choir

The Eighth Lesson

The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.

Matthew 2:1-12

The Carol: *When Christmas Morn is Dawning*

Men's Choir

The Ninth Lesson

St. John unfolds the mystery of the incarnation.

John 1:1-14

The Carol: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Hymn 384

The Christmas Homily *"The Incarnation Revealed in the Dark of Night"*

John 1:1-14

The Tithes and Offerings are gathered.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

Brahms

Please stand

The Blessing

May God who came down to earth as love incarnate, fill your hearts with faith, hope, and love as you celebrate his birth to be our Savior and his return to gather to himself all who love him and long for his reappearing. May the joy of his birth be yours this Christmas and may you continue to believe in him and belong to him through baptism throughout the New Year.

The Closing Carol: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

Hymn 363

(During the singing of this hymn the people light their candles from the pastor's candle, passing the light to the person beside. Please do not tilt a lighted candle. Be careful with hot wax. Parents must supervise children with lighted candles. Return the candles to the ushers after the service.)

Preaching: Rev. Jeff Caithamer
Organist & Men's Choir Director: Mark Dirksen
Elders: John & Bob

The pastor and staff of St. John Lutheran Church and School thank the congregation for their gifts of love and encouragement and wish all of God's people a blessed Christmas and peace in the New Year.

“As On the Night”

Orlando Gibbons

*As on the night before the blessed morn
A troop of angels unto shepherds told
Where, in a stable, He was poorly born,
Whom nor the earth nor heav'n of heav'ns can hold.
Thro' Beth-le'm rung this news at their return;
Yea, angels sung that God with us was born.
And they made mirth because we should not mourn.
His love, therefore, O let us know confess,
And to the sons of men His works express.*

“Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

Craig Courtney

*Where shepherds lately knelt, and kept the angel's word,
I come in half belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me.*

*In that unlikely place, I find Him as they said;
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! And in a manger bed
A still small voice to cry one day for me.*

*Can I, will I forget how Love was born and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me.*

“When Christmas Morn is Dawning”

*When Christmas morn is dawning I wish that I could be
There by the manger cradle God's Son, newborn, to see.*

*How kind of you, our Savior, for us to come to earth.
Oh, may we not, by sinning despise Your lowly birth.*

*We need you, O Lord Jesus, to be our dearest friend.
Your love will guard and guide us and keep us to life's end.*